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EARLY TIMES IN INDIANAPOLIS.

BY MRS. JULIA MERRILL MOORES.

[These reminiscences, written for the Woman's Club of Indianapolis, were originally printed in *The Indianapolis News* for December 18, 1908. Mrs. Moores, now deceased, was a life-long resident of Indianapolis. She was the daughter of Samuel Merrill, our first State Treasurer.]

I have gone back in the memories of my friends and of my own to the days when there were no lights at night except candles—and tallow candles at that—when there were no such things as matches and every candle was lighted by blowing one's breath of life away over a red hot coal held in the spindle-legged tongs; when the great fireplace was filled with logs of wood, making the grandest fire in the world; when at night the glowing back stick was carefully covered in a grave of ashes in order to furnish food for the morning fire and when, if unfortunately the protecting ashes failed, one of the children was sent to the nearest neighbor for a shovel of coals with which to start the fire for the morning's breakfast; when each household had its own dairy at the door; when the gardens were rife with flowers and fruits and vegetables; when everybody slept in nightcaps; when a rail fence inclosed the grounds of the county seminary; when the streets were crooked and full of stumps and lined on each side with dog fennel—and the alleys—ugh! growing jimson.

Our neighbors were not always those that were nearest our home. Up Washington street, or off around the Circle, or across the commons or fields, our nimble feet flew on the way to school as we went by to get the company of a friend or as we returned home, stopping to take a schoolmate with us to stay all night. What evenings of fun spent in merry games! How we gathered the spicy four-o'clocks into our aprons, and sat on the porch, and of them made necklaces! How we cracked the capsules of the "touch-me-nots!" How we talked after we went to bed! And with what joy we went hand in hand to school in the morning! Friendships were then formed which the years have not tarnished nor broken.

Near my father's house, in Washington street, at the west end of where the Claypool Hotel now stands, lived for a short time a young merchant from Philadelphia. He had brought to this frame house, hurriedly built on wooden piles, his bride and her little sister. The child, only seven or eight years old, easily won the hearts of the neighbors by her grace and beauty and gentle manners. One unfortunate day, while handling her sister's scissors, she fell, and the cruel instrument pierced her knee, the point breaking off under the joint. A doctor was sent for. He was on his farm felling trees and burning brush, doing this work at odd times, when not practicing medicine. He hurried to the home of the little patient. His hands were hard, his fingers unfit to touch the child's tender flesh. In those primitive times there were no blessed anaesthetics, and consciously the pain had to be borne. Under the hand of the doctor she lay for hours, while he cut into the limb searching for the broken point; finally, unwilling though he was, the only thing to be done was amputation. He attempted this, but the hard hands could not catch or hold the artery, and death came to the relief of the sufferer. The sister in her passion of grief fled to the woods nearby to lose sight of the dear child. The neighbors gathered together in sympathy and love, and their kind hands carried the little body to the graveyard by the river.

The unsightly building in which the family lived stood for years, and more than one tragedy was enacted within its walls. Here among the early pastors of the Presbyterian church came the Rev. George Bush, a scholar, a gentleman and a Christian. Later years made him professor of Hebrew and Oriental literature in the University of New York. He brought with him from Morristown, New Jersey, his bride, a fair girl, who had known nothing of the trials of frontier life—the daughter of a United States Senator. Think of setting up housekeeping in this barn of a house! No furniture or carpet stores, no hardware or china supplies. A salary of \$400, rarely fully paid. The little that they had, brought from her own home through the unbroken forest in a wagon. The bright girl wife soon gained the love of her neigh-

bors, and when she lay dying before the year was out, a tender mother took the new-born babe to her breast, sharing willingly her own baby's food with the motherless child, and when this kind mother's strength failed, another was found who was equally loving and generous. From this home was the stranger carried, through the narrow pathway bordered by tall iron-weed and buried beneath the green grass and wild flowers near the river.

A little love story belongs to a very early day; so little and simple it is like a humming bird's nest in an unbrageous oak. They were but boy and girl. She was fair and sweet, a dainty, delicate, laughing, singing, light-hearted, loving creature. He was a tall, slender, graceful youth, fond of woods and waters, an active and daring hunter, of a droll and merry wit, gifted in conversation, most winning and charming in all his ways. She was gifted in music and had been trained to the piano almost from her infancy. He had a high spirit and refined tastes; he was, in short, nature's gentleman, as she was a natural lady. He was an orphan and poor. She was fatherless, with a mother who was a grand woman, but had somewhat of a worldly taint. Perhaps I should say she was prudent. She did not approve of long engagements, nor exchange of letters. The youth went South to continue the study of his profession and begin his practice. He was eighteen, she still younger. A mischievous little girl called out at an evening party on which a sudden silence had fallen: "Mary Field cried when Harry Floyd went away." Everybody smiled. It was only a boy and girl affair to the two parted. They never met again. He studied and entered on the practice of medicine. His prospects were good and he prepared to claim his bride, when, like a death blow, came the tidings that she was married. She had succumbed to the influence and authority of her mother and to the entreaties of a wooer who was both gentle and rich.

The young man lost heart, dropped his hard-won practice, fell out of the race, married a poor, pretty orphan, and buried him-

self on a Southern plantation, which was itself hidden in a tangled wilderness of wild cane, vines, palmetto, wide-spreading gum, and tall funereal cypress draped in long gray Spanish moss. It was a gloomy place, but it suited him, and his child-wife was unconsciously happy in a home of her own. There he said once, to almost the only friend of early days he had seen in many years: "Do you remember Mary Field?" "Yes," was the surprised reply, for the friend knew or guessed the story, and Mary was dead. "Well," he went on, "she is my first thought when I wake from deep sleep, whether it be in the morning or at deep midnight. And so it will be if I live to be ninety." He has long lain in his grave, and they are both forgotten, except by a few faithful hearts.

The rival papers of the town were, after the removal of the capital from Corydon, the Democrat and the Journal, the former printed by Morrison & Bolton. The latter was owned and published by Douglass & Maguire. Mr. Douglass was State printer and moved with the capital, as did the other State officers. It took eleven days to make the journey from the Ohio river to where our city now stands. It was no light thing to get up even a weekly in those days. The news from Europe was nearly two months in arriving. News from the East was ten or twelve days behind time. No railroads, no telegraphs. There is no nobler trade than that of the printer. And if ever there was a pure man in his place it was John Douglass, editor and proprietor of the Indiana Journal.

The rival hotels were opposite each other in Washington street, near where the New York store now stands. They were kept by John Hawkins and Samuel Henderson, both Kentuckians. The arrival of the stage coach was always announced by the driver with a grand flourish and blowing of horns. The young men of the settlement gathered about the doors of the taverns on summer evenings to watch the coming of the stage and the unloading of passengers. On a certain day, from the door of the coach, stepped a well-to-do mother, and behind her, one after

the other, followed with dignity and grace five lovely young women. What an acquisition to the town!

Instantly one of the young men chose his love. Before long he married the girl of his choice. The mother was the grandmother of Mrs. John D. Howland, and the young man who married one of the daughters was her father, the late Alfred Harrison. Of the other daughters, one became the wife of Dr. Charles McDougal, an army surgeon; another of John Finley, author of "The Hoosier's Nest," and another of Bishop Ames. The remaining daughter, Pamela Hanson, never married.

As early as 1823 there were in Indianapolis three churches—the Baptist, at the corner of Maryland and South Meridian streets; Wesley Chapel, at the corner of North Meridian and the Circle, and the Presbyterian, in Pennsylvania street, near the center of the first square south of Market. The latter was a frame building, costing with the lot \$1,600. The house was built before the church was formed, but on July 5, 1823, an organization of fifteen members was completed and on the following day possession was taken of the new building. The pulpit was supplied for the first year by two home missionaries, of which the Rev. Isaac Reed, a queer specimen of theology, was one, and the Rev. David C. Proctor, the other. In July, 1824, the Rev. George Bush, of Morristown, New Jersey, accepted the pastorate and was installed in March, 1825. A modest salary of \$400 was promised him, if it could be raised. My parents attended this church, and so my early memories begin here.

The lecture room, which was also rented for day schools, was a part of the main building, but shut off from it by wooden doors, which, when it became necessary to throw the rooms together, were raised and fastened to the ceiling by iron clamps. I recollect when a little child, too young as yet to go to church or to attend school regularly, going as a visitor, with my sisters. I entertained myself by climbing on a seat, and on my knees peeping through a crack in the great door. The ceiling of the main room was painted a light blue, after the style of the Hollanders of New York. In my childish innocence, heaven itself could not

surpass the beauty before me. But as I grew older and arose to the dignity of attending Sunday services, the room devoted to worship was not found to be so lovely.

The building was set back in the yard and there were two front doors in Pennsylvania street. The high pulpit was between these doors. Two aisles ran through the main room back of the lecture room. The pews were dark, with a ledge of darker wood at the top. They were cushionless. There was no carpet. Those were not the days when the service of God was softened or made easy to the Christian. As to lights—Deuteronomy Jones says: "They ain't nothin' more innercent than a lighted candle—kep' away up on the wall out o' the draft, the way they is in church," and our church was lighted with tallow candles in tin sconces on the wall. There was a small gallery over the school in which seats were provided for the few colored people that had followed their masters from Kentucky or Virginia and who lived and died in service. The congregation was good, the Presbyterian families of the town attending conscientiously. The services were long and strictly orthodox. Very little liberty of thought or action was allowed. One pastor was denounced for his wicked reading of Shakespeare. And novels! No habit could be more pernicious or vile in the sight of pastor or elders. The people alone were not rebuked. One preacher leaned from the pulpit and cried, "Elders! Where are our elders? We have but one—and he, a milk and water man!"

As it was in medicine at that time, the most stringent and severe remedies were used for even the simplest ailments, so our theologians knew no antidotes but the most rigorous. On communion Sunday the long table spread with a snowy cloth was stretched in front of the pulpit. The members were gathered about the table and opportunity was given by the pastor, while the sheep sang, "'Twas on that dark and doleful night," for the goats to retire. The choir sat on the side seat, south of the pulpit. Why should I not name them? They have years ago joined the "choir invisible"—Mr. and Mrs. Caleb Scudder and their young boarder, John L. Ketcham. They were all fine sing-

ers. But the hymns and tunes were few and oft repeated. How sweet to the drowsy ear of the waking child were the words:

Welcome sweet day of rest
That saw the Lord arise,

sung to "Lisbon," or

Come sound His praise abroad
And hymns of glory sing,

to the old tune of "Silver Street." Or when the occupant of the pulpit chanced to be a reader full of thought and feeling, how those sweet words

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields,

touched the thoughtless hearer. And then, surpassing all, can any that ever heard that hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," sung by this choir, ever forget its glory? The soul, even of the child, was uplifted and heaven seemed to open. This choir of three occasionally sang an anthem. The one beginning, "The Lord is risen, indeed," was a favorite. The congregation could give no assistance, and so, when the counter solo was reached, the treble went up to it. One who tells me of this says: "To this day it is fine, except the counter line." Rarely was a new tune introduced, but on a lucky or unlucky day one of the members of the church went East and chanced to hear "Boylston," a tune interspersed with grace notes. He was so delighted with it that on his return he raised it five times in one Sunday!

Thus things went on until 1837, at which time the division in the Presbyterian church throughout the Union of the old and new school took place. There were among the members those who held the strongest Calvinistic views. They could not give up one iota. The consequence was that fifteen members asked to be dismissed and speedily formed the Second Presbyterian

church. Feeling was high on both sides. We can now scarcely believe that it could have been so strong with Christians. On the first Sunday after the division the wandering sheep, being unable to obtain a pastor, returned to the fold to take communion with their former brethren. They were not invited to join in the service. They sat silent, one dissenter only being brave enough to claim his acceptance through a common Saviour, went forward and partook of the bread and wine. This instance takes us back to Christ's time, when His disciples came saying: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we forbade him, because he followed not us." And the calm reply was, "Forbid him not. He that is not against us is for us."

About this time, or perhaps a little earlier, Christ's church, on the Circle, was formed, its members being principally from the First church. The Rev. Mr. McKennon, of the First church, resigned and the two feeble churches were without leaders. Soon, however, three strong intellectual clergymen were living in Indianapolis. The Rev. Edwin R. Ames was appointed presiding elder of this district, and was soon made bishop of the Methodist church of Indiana. The Rev. Phineas D. Gurley was called to the pastorate of the First church, which place he occupied for nine years. He was then called to a fine church in Washington, and was afterward appointed chaplain to Congress. In an upper room "of the old county seminary," within a stone's throw of where the Second church now stands, a young man, not striking in appearance, and only twenty-six years old, preached his trial sermon to the feeble colony. It struck home. A call was given and eight happy years of Henry Ward Beecher's life were spent in the service of the Second church. But I might more truthfully say he served the whole of Indianapolis. Every one knew him. His love of flowers and of gardening drew him to the whole community, and to this day there are shrubs growing and flowers blooming, the gift of this preacher of many years ago. His love of nature drew him nearer both to God and man. Under his earnest ministration his church grew rapidly and in a short time was stronger than its parent. Mr. Gurley and Mr. Beecher

were warm friends, and this friendship served to unite the divided churches.

In close connection with the church of whatever denomination in the early days was the Sunday school, where the children might be trained early in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The first Sunday school, a miscellaneous affair, was held in the cabinet shop of Caleb Scudder, at Washington and Illinois streets. This was before my day, but I recollect the kind of terror I felt on passing the door of the shop. This aforesaid door was painted green and filled with broad-headed, hand-wrought nails, for the purpose, it was said, of turning the edges of the hatchets of the Indians and thus obtaining safety from their assaults. The little shop stood on the corner for years and was always associated in our childish minds with the first Sunday school and the frightful Indian.

Afterward the Union Sunday school was held in the Presbyterian church. But as soon as superintendent and teachers could be obtained, each denomination went to itself. The Sunday school of the Presbyterian church proper was an institution for the strict religious training of its children. Everything was solemn. The hymns were slowly sung. The prayers which were started on their way to the throne of God went up with awful solemnity. The lessons—can we ever forget them? Each child was required to commit to memory whole chapters. A certain number of questions from the shorter catechism must be answered promptly and distinctly, and at the close of school a text of Scripture, appropriate to the lesson, was recited by each scholar. And then the talks with the innocent child on that mysterious gift, called the soul! Nothing in the whole world was so dreadful as this same gift.

Strict obedience was required. In case of failure instant dismissal followed. A boy of fifteen was told to march with his class up the aisles and before the pulpit, taking the circuit of the room. Being timid, he refused. The command was given to obey or leave the school. He chose to leave, and a hymn was solemnly sung after his departure:

How painful 'tis to turn away
A scholar from our school.

Think of a muse descending to such dishwashing business!

The library was made up of books published by the American Sunday School Union. My memory still holds in sweet possession such stories as "Anna Ross," "Ruth Lee and the Persecuted Family," and "Henry and His Bearer." "Pilgrim's Progress" and the "Holy War" were great treasures.

There was one gala day in the year. This was the Fourth of July. It was a grand affair, and how we looked forward to it with longing and hope; and backward—well, I will not spoil the glory by painfully recalling the long march through the hot sun, the tired feet, the dusty streets, the pretty white dresses all soiled and torn, and the weeds! We found rest and delight in some beautiful grove where perhaps some Revolutionary hero sat as figure-head on the platform, and some embryo student gave us his views on the growth of the country. After the oration we were regaled with cold well water and rusk from the crude bakery. Then with screams of delight we all joined in singing:

Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light?

Who that ever participated can ever forget the proud bearing of Mr. James Blake as he led forth this army of young heroes to glorify our country and Independence day? I recollect two girls from the backwoods shouting out as he galloped back and forth with his gay trappings and prancing steed: "See! see how he looks like Napoleon Bonaparte."

Soon after the settlement of the town, families coming from Virginia, Kentucky, New England, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio formed a fine class of citizens. The day school was started. When there was no teacher, as sometimes happened, a citizen, college bred, took up for a time the training of the children, and even a room was given in a private house for a teacher who could not pay rent.

But about 1825 or 1826 a gentleman, a professor of Transyl-

vania University, moved his family from Kentucky into this newly made town. His work was ready for him. In the little back room of the Presbyterian church, Ebenezer Sharpe, of blessed memory, took up the sweet task of teaching the children of the town. He was a fine classical scholar, and taught Latin and Greek as well as English. The opening of the school each morning with the reading of Scripture and prayer is still fresh in the minds of some who were then his pupils. He was a fine reader, and the eloquent language of the eighth chapter of Romans and the voice and fervor of the reader still live in connection. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" I do not know whether Murray's English reader or its introduction had then reached so far West, but often the eloquent words of Paul were used for practice in reading. This teacher was always called "Old Mr. Sharpe," and age was associated with him. I think his gentle ways and kindly manner gave reason for it. Some years ago I stood by his grave and read on the stone, to my amazement: "In memory of Ebenezer Sharpe, who died in the fifty-sixth year of his age." I have a little poem written by him October 15, 1830. It is an invitation to the family of John G. Brown to attend the wedding of his daughter, and is as follows:

Brother Brown:

There is a lass within our town,
They call her Isabella;
Not satisfied to live alone,
She's bent on a good fellow.

To-morrow when the sun goes down
For this we'll have a party,
To which pray bring good sister Brown,
Eliza and Miss Barbee.

As the town grew the schools became more numerous, of course. Among the teachers about 1830 was a Mr. McPherson,

of Philadelphia. He was a well-dressed young man, who by his gentlemanly appearance excited the envy and jealousy and finally the hatred of a few low-down ferrymen. There was then no "old bridge" across White river. One lovely Sunday morning the young man started for a walk in the woods on the other side of the river. He called on the ferryman to row him over. But hatred filled the soul of the brute, and in an evil moment overcame him. The day after the stream bore witness to the wicked deed, for the body of the guiltless young man rose to the surface bearing marks of violence, which were indisputable.

Other teachers ran their course. Gregg, Dumont, Holliday, Sullivan, Davidson, Marston, Kemper, Lang and Josephus Cicero Worrall. These schools, with the exception of Mr. Holliday's, were open both to boys and girls. The teachers were rigid disciplinarians. The rod and the ferrule were the instruments of punishment for the boys. For the girls, keeping in, ear pulling and standing on the floor. Dr. Johnson said more than one hundred years ago: "There is now less flogging in our schools than formerly, but there is less learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other." The abatement of flogging in the schools of Indianapolis had not begun in the early thirties.

There was an infant school, a kind of premonitory kindergarten, taught by Miss Sergeant, also a fine school for girls, taught by Miss Brooks and Miss Sawyer from near Boston, and later, Miss Hooker, followed by the Miss Axtells. These schools were popular. In testimony to the inexpensiveness of education in those early days, I give an old bill (receipted) found among my father's papers:

Mr. Samuel Merrill to Thomas D. Gregg, Dr.

Feb. 7, 1836, to tuition of Jane, 11-12 pr. qr., \$4.00 pr. qr... \$3 67

May 7, to tuition of Priscilla and Julia, \$4.00 pr. qr..... 4 00

May 7, tuition of Catharine and Samuel, \$4.00 pr. qr..... 4 00

Total\$11 67

Going home from school one day, my walk for a short distance lay underneath a row of generous cherry trees filled with the radiant fruit. I walked slowly on the grass; there were few pavements in those days. The birds had loosened the pretty cherries. I picked them from the grass and ate them. While thus employed I lifted my eyes and saw coming across the street a little girl I had never before seen. There was something wondrously fascinating about a stranger. Her heavy dark hair hung about her neck, her black eyes fairly startled me. She had on a blue calico dress, and, oh, wonderful to relate, a black silk apron—embroidered in the corners. I had never seen anything quite so pretentious. My own dress was gingham, surmounted by a gingham apron, hung from the shoulders. She walked straight up to me and looked me in the face. I looked at her. We spake never a word. She turned and went back across the street to her home, and I went to mine. This was my first meeting with Laura Ream.

We are sometimes inclined to undervalue the cultivation of this early period. But ladies were ladies then as now. Even now all the advantages of education and refinement cannot, to use a homely adage, "make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." Among my mother's friends I do not recollect loud voices or rude manners. Among these women were those who were quiet and gentle, or bright and sparkling, often dressed with exquisite taste. It was a delight to see the lady of the "new purchase" put on her pretty striped silk or olive green satin, place her soft lace cap (for all married ladies wore caps) over her abundant hair, and enter into a company either as guest or hostess. They were ladies, and they entertained gentlemen, such as Governor Noble, the Supreme judges, Blackford, Downey and Sullivan, and Judge Huntingdon and McLean, and young men afterward of high mark, as Richard W. Thompson and Hugh McCulloch, and our own gentlemen. Such men would not have spent evenings with ill-mannered fools for company. Society was good—in one respect better than now. There was then none of that snobbery which fears for its respectability.

We step with reverent tread over the dear past. We look back to the earnest, honest, liberal men, to the brave, unselfish, hospitable women of that time, and glory in their lives. They builded better than they knew. The ample grounds and fine old houses of fifty years ago have given place to stately churches and generous schoolhouses. They left us a rare inheritance—the firm foundation of this beautiful city. Let us see that we keep it unimpaired and hand it down to coming generations as it was given to us.

REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER.

RECORD OF JACOB MIKESELL.

Secured by Mrs. Elinor H. Campbell, Jeffersonville, Indiana.

BORN in Frederick county, Maryland, November 2, 1756. Enlisted from that place. Died in Clark county, Indiana. Buried on the place overlooking the Ohio river now known as the Albert Miles farm.

Dates of Enlistment—July, 1776; August, 1777; 1781.

Length of Service—Till middle of December, 1776, under Captain Daniel Dorsey and Colonel Josiah Carvel Hall, of Maryland; two months in 1777 under Captain Martin Derr and Colonel Baker Johnson, of Maryland; one week in 1781 (was impressed with team).

Application for pension dated September 7, 1832. Residence at that time, Jefferson county, Indiana.